

ESSAY IDEAS and GUIDELINES FOR THE 2013 STUDENT CONTEST

The Essay Contest this year offers four topics or subject ideas for you to choose from. Number one draws on universal issues found in many of the recent KPBS “One Book, One San Diego” title selections; numbers two, three, and four are popular traditional topics/ideas you may choose from. Use narrative techniques and follow the guidelines for size, spacing, font, etc. as outlined on the entry form.

Issues such as immigration, religious differences, culture ‘clash’, parental discord, consequences of war, sorrow, grief and friendship are universal and can be found in the book titles selected for KPBS’ “One Book, One San Diego”. Listed below are some of these titles that you might enjoy. Read one of these books and write an essay discussing how or where you experienced (or observed or read about) the issues addressed in this title.

- Sky of Red Poppies* by Zohreh Ghahremani

This story is set in pre-revolutionary Iran and tells about two young girls who become best friends even though they come from different social and economic classes. As they grow up, they grow apart by virtue of the different paths they choose, and the reader gets to see the consequences of those decisions.

- Moloka'i* by Alan Brennert

Young Rachel Kalama’s dreams for the future are shattered at age seven by the discovery that she has leprosy. She is sent to a leper colony on the island of Moloka'i. This story is about life and hope, AND the strength of the human spirit.

- Into the Beautiful North* by Luis Alberto Urrea

19-year-old Nayeli, who works at a taco shop in her Mexican village, dreams about her father who, along with almost all the male villagers, has long ago gone north, seeking a better life. She is a determined young woman whose quest to find herself on both sides of “the fence” makes a compelling story.

- Outcasts United* by Warren St John

This story follows a refugee soccer team of 15 year old boys during a pivotal season in their lives and that of their families and their charismatic coach. They all struggle to build new lives in a small Georgia town. There is a story about resilience in the face of extraordinary hardship, the power of one person to make a difference and the daunting challenge of creating community in a place where people seem to have so little in common.

- The Gangster We Are All Looking For* by lê thi diem thúy

This is a true-life novel about a Vietnamese refugee family in San Diego, told from the perspective of the family’s daughter, who is just six years old when they arrive. The narrator and her parents struggle to adapt to life in an unfamiliar land.

If these titles do not ‘work’ for you we have assembled a list of similar titles and have included it with this year’s contest information. You may choose a title from this list to read and write about.

California Literacy Standard: 2.2 - Response to Literature (Grades 4, 8, 10)

Traditional Topics:

(2) A book that inspired me to help save the earth I will inherit is... Why?

California Literacy Standard:

2.2 - Response to Literature (Grades 4, 8, 10)

(3) If all the books in the world were about to disappear, but you could save one, what would it be? Why?

California Literacy Standard:

2.3 - Information Report (Grades 4, 8, 10)

(4) What resources are available to me at my San Diego Public Library relating to my personal interests, such as my favorite sport, hobby, etc.? Describe.

California Literacy Standards:

2.3 - Information Report (Grade 4, 8, 10)

2.4 - Persuasive Composition (Grades 8 & 10)

For more information about “One Book, One San Diego” go to <http://www.kpbs.org/one-book/>